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A POSITION PAPER ON THE TEACHING OF READING IN GRADES K-1-2-3.

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DESCRIPTORS- *INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN, *READING INSTRUCTION, READING READINESS, *EARLY READING, RECREATIONAL READING, CRITICAL READING, MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES, *INSERVICE PROGRAMS, CURRICULUM EVALUATION,

AN OUTLINE TO BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN THE PRIMARY GRADES IN KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI, IS PRESENTED. THE RESULT OF AN INSERVICE WORKSHOP, THE OUTLINE IS DEVELOPED UNDER FIVE MAJOR HEADINGS--(1) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, (2) THE NATURE OF READING ACCORDING TO THE INDEXES USED BY LINGUISTS AND SEMANTICISTS, (3) READING READINESS--THE BASIC PREREADING ABILITIES AND PROGRESS, (4) INITIAL READING INSTRUCTION, AND (5) RAPID PROGRESS IN READING DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS, RECREATIONAL READING, AND JUDGMENT OF DEPTH AND QUALITY. SUGGESTIONS FOR MOTIVATING AND SHARING RECREATIONAL READING ARE LISTED. (MC)

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A POSITION PAPER ON THE TEACHING OF READING IN GRADES K-1-2-3

Prepared by the Reading Workshop Participants, Summer, 1967.

This paper represents the work of fifteen Kirksville, Mo. teachers during an arduous week of lectures, reading, discussion, writing, and revising. They prepared this written outline of a basis of good reading instruction in the primary grades.

Read and evaluate it carefully. There is still much that might be done. Let us build on this foundation as we continue to develop proficiency in teaching young children the most important skill---effective reading.

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WALCUTT, CHARLES C.

Since reading can be defined as an interpretation of printed symbols; since our society places a high priority upon the ability to read; since the public school is charged with the responsibility of educating each child to the limit of his capacity, it is imperative that reading be taught as effectively as possible. With this in mind the following are the objectives of our reading program:

I. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A. To provide continuing readiness for reading so that each child will have a background of experiences that is essential for success in reading and a desire to learn to read.

B. To integrate reading with other areas of the curriculum.

C. To employ methods in teaching that meet individual needs and capabilities of pupils.

D. To organize a sequential, continuous development of essential reading skills for each child.

E. To establish a program of word-attack skills broad enough to include a variety of means by which a child can gain independence in reading.

F. To stress the importance of comprehension, by providing activities and exercises that further its development.

G. To interpret the reading program and each pupil's progress in reading to parents.

H. To encourage children to read for enjoyment and personal satisfaction.

I. To provide for systematic and continuous evaluation so that corrective instruction may be a part of everyday teaching.

J. To provide adequate remedial instruction when necessary.

II. THE NATURE OF READING*

A. The meaningful interpretation of verbal symbols; securing the meaning intended by the author and reacting to it.

B. To go beyond comprehension of ideas and facts presented by an author; to evaluate them and fuse them with previously-gained knowledge and experiences.

C. To identify the purpose for reading various materials and adapt the rate and method of reading to that purpose.

* See Reading - A Professional Definition Appended

III. READING READINESS

A. A child is ready to read when he has reached a stage of general maturity and possesses a background of experiences and the personal and social adjustments which make it possible for him to progress at a normal rate in learning to read. The proper classroom climate will greatly implement and reinforce the adjustments for learning.

B. Basic pre-reading abilities are:

1. Facility in speaking and listening.
2. Interest in books and stories and an awareness of the purpose they serve.
3. Ability to make auditory and visual discriminations of word forms.
4. Sensitivity to rhymes and the sounds of words.
5. Ability to interpret pictures.
6. Ability to follow sequential patterns.
7. Ability to pay attention.
8. Ability to follow directions given orally by the teacher.

C. Evaluation through:

1. Teacher appraisal
2. Readiness tests
3. Mental tests

IV. INITIAL READING INSTRUCTION

A. Possible approaches:

1. Basal Reading Approach
2. Individualized Instruction
3. Experience Method
4. Programed Instruction
5. Linguistic Approach
6. Initial Teaching Alphabet

B. Desirable results:

1. Proficiency in "word attack" skills.
2. Ability to read fluently, both orally and silently.
3. Command of an adequate sight vocabulary.
4. Acquisition of literal and inferred comprehension.
5. Development of critical reading ability.
6. Ability to identify sequence of events, main and subordinate thoughts, and details.

C. Evaluation and continuous corrective procedures to be in effect daily.

1. Teacher observation and appraisal.
2. Testing
   a. Textbook skill tests (unit and book)
   b. Standardized achievement tests and tests of mental maturity.
   c. Teacher-made tests
3. Follow-up
   a. Worksheets, skill-development books, individual instruction, supplementary texts, selected duplicated materials and word games designed to strengthen skills.
   b. Aids such as filmstrips, films, controlled readers, tape recorders, charts, opaque projectors, overhead projectors and television programs.

4. Utilization of all services available to correct physical disabilities such as: speech problems, visual defects, hearing deficiencies, dental problems and over-all physical well-being.
5. Utilization of all procedures available to foster mental health and to remediate difficulties.

V. RAPID PROGRESS IN READING DEVELOPMENT

A. The stage of rapid progress in fundamental skills, habits, attitudes, and taste is usually reached at second and third grade level. Silent reading is more rapid than oral reading; children are able to read with considerable understanding and pleasure. At this stage, reading skills are reinforced and expanded through continuous and sequential instruction by improving the mechanics of reading and stressing comprehension skills.

As children learn to associate sounds and meanings of spoken words with printed words, they are developing the following skills, abilities, and understanding:

1. Knowledge and appreciation of the fundamental vowel rules.
   a. The importance of the position of the vowel.
   b. The principle of silence applied to vowels.
   c. The principle of variety in vowel sounds.
2. Recognition of words formed by adding endings, prefixes, and suffixes.
3. Identification of root words in variants and derivatives.
4. Recognition of contractions with one or more letters omitted.
5. Use of knowledge of consonant sounds and letters to identify words.
6. Recognition of compound words.
7. Application of the principles of syllabification.

8. Use of context clues to determine meaning and pronunciation of printed words.
9. Development of readiness for using the dictionary
   a. Recognizing alphabetical sequence
   b. Understanding that a word may have more than one meaning.
10. Classification of words by sound, form, meaning, and function.

Basic readers, with the teacher's manuals and children's skill-development books, are arranged to introduce skills gradually and sequentially. It is important that the teacher give equal time to the development of the whole child in teaching reading skills.

Comprehension may be developed through various kinds of skills as understanding is emphasized from the outset of reading-instructions as well as whenever reading is employed thereafter. Since the child in second and third grade level is reading a wider array of materials in longer and more complex passages, he develops many comprehension abilities that may be classified under five major headings. He should have a degree of proficiency in each of these abilities and adjust them to meet the purpose for which he is reading.

1. Reading to interpret.

   Grasping the main idea, forming opinions and predicting the outcomes, comparing and contrasting.

2. Reading to organize.

   Perceiving relationship (time, sequence, cause-effect, place, size), classifying and summarizing materials, following more complex directions.

3. Reading for factual information.

   Developing the ability to read for details, to locate specific information, verify opinions.

4. Reading to evaluate.

   Differentiating fact from opinion, developing the skills of critical reading, appraising its worthiness, recognizing the need of reading with a certain amount of tolerance.

5. Reading for appreciation.

   Forming sensory images sensing emotional reactions and motives of the story characters, understanding the people in the story, using personal experiences to interpret the story situation, anticipating and appreciating the story plot.

The child must be taught how to use these comprehension abilities, and be given practice in various sorts of situations so that he may learn how to become an understanding reader.

B. Functional or work-type reading includes activities to develop the ability to locate pertinent reading material as well as special application of comprehension skills and study skills in the various content fields.

By the end of grade three children should be reading for many purposes and should be capable of getting much information without the teacher's guidance. They should do more critical reading, distinguishing the essential from the non-essential. Among the wider reading purposes that should develop are the following:

1. Begins to learn to appraise qualities of books for essential information.

a. Picks out topic sentences in paragraphs.

b. Makes simple outline by following skeleton outline prepared by teacher.

2. Learns to examine truth or correctness of statements and to detect discrepancies.

a. Looks in reference material to validate statements.

b. Learns to distinguish "make believe" from true.

3. Brings own experience to bear on the author's statements.

a. Is asked to cite instances, real or vicarious, related to the views of the author.

b. Selects from various meanings of the word the one intended by the author.

c. In some cases has an understanding of the author's background so that the purposes of writing are more nearly understood.

4. Predicts outcomes on the basis of clues given by the author.

a. Has had opportunities to finish unfinished stories, letters, paragraphs etc.

b. Senses the mood of the story and has sufficient background to make predictions of outcomes.

c. Has had sufficient experience in written expression (creative writing) so that he knows what constitutes a sentence, a paragraph, a story.

d. Is encouraged to express ideas creatively.

5. Finds reasons for events and actions.

a. Is able to make inferences and is encouraged to do so.

b. Has had sufficient practice in establishing sequence.

c. Is developing time and space concepts.

6. Reads aloud well enough to give and get enjoyment.
   a. Realizes that reading is communication.
   b. Understands and follows rules of punctuation.
   c. Has developed poise enough to feel at ease when reading to a group.
7. Uses libraries for recreational and study reading and reads as a leisure-time activity.
   a. Has been helped to develop a variety of interests in reading.
   b. Appreciates various printed media (supplementary books, magazines, newspapers etc.).
   c. Is given the opportunity and the time to browse in the reading corner.
   d. Has been taken to the public library and encouraged to get a library card.
   e. Has heard oral reading by the teacher and realizes the pleasure that can be derived from it.
   f. Has opportunity to discuss books read with teacher and classmates.
   g. Is permitted to take outside reading material home to share with families.
   h. Parents have been encouraged to provide a place to store books purchased by them for the child.
8. Finds more motivation to read.
   a. A problem-solving approach is used by the teacher in content areas where reading is done for specific purposes.
   b. Is helped to participate in panel discussions, debates, group discussions, and is encouraged to express opinions supported by fact.

c. Is encouraged and helped to use reading as one way to find answers to questions instead of having answers "given" by the teacher (inductive or discovery).

9. Learns to read for a purpose.

a. Has had help in discovering definite purposes for reading has been assigned.

b. Is able to formulate questions, the answers to which are found by reading.

10. Learns to use dictionaries, the encyclopedia and other reference books.

a. Has had dictionaries since pre-reading stages.

b. Has had dictionary skills taught in a developmental manner.

c. Has a dictionary and reference books accessible at all times.

d. Has been helped to use supplementary textbooks and other library materials.

C. Recreational reading, in which enjoyment, broadening of interests, and development of discriminating taste are the goals, comprises the third component of the rapid progress in reading skills stage of learning to read.

As important as learning to read for information is learning to read for pleasure. It is up to the teacher to capitalize on any such classroom displays of interest by directing the children to more of the kinds of materials they will enjoy. The aim of a good reading program is to develop the kind of readers who get personal satisfaction from reading.

Recreational reading plays an important part in all phases of child growth and development: emotional, social, physical and intellectual.

Free reading of books and magazines may be used to meet the various needs of boys and girls. Books and magazines may be used to give boys and girls information needed to satisfy their curiosity concerning the world about them; to expand the individual child's horizons of time and space; to help boys and girls understand themselves and others; to stimulate the imagination and offer temporary release from the problems and tensions of real life; and to cause children to relive the spiritual experiences of the human race.

Recreational reading may be guided and encouraged by the following:

1. Teachers must know books, stories, and poems! They must be actively interested in childrens' reading for enjoyment. Teachers must talk to children enthusiastically about books. This is essential if we hope to make children want to read.
2. Provide opportunities (formal or informal) for teachers to get together to discuss books.
3. Provide plenty of recreational books on many different levels and on many different subjects. There should be books two levels below and two levels above grade level. An adequate collection will contain at least three times as many books as there are children in the room.
4. Make a detailed study of the children's interest, needs, and experiences in selecting materials for the individual child.
5. Allow children to help in the selection of reading materials to be purchased.
6. Make the library corner of the room an attractive place. A rug and a few chairs will make it comfortable for children.

7. Provide a time for free reading. A definite time should be set. The amount of time devoted to free reading will depend upon the time spent upon other phases of reading and the amount of suitable reading material available. Several periods should be scheduled each week. The teacher should create an atmosphere in which reading is valued.
8. Let the child choose what he wants to read. (Recreatory reading for one child may be the Sears-Roebuck Catalog; for another the telephone directory.) There must be teacher-pupil planning in the choosing of books in some cases.
9. Make it a point to read aloud to children. It is an activity that should be a part of every day.
10. Circulate books from the main library from room to room. Teachers shouldn't be possessive with certain books.
11. Help children get the library habit. They should become familiar with the local (Sojourners) library and its services. Take children on a tour of the library. Have them obtain library cards. Make one day "Library Day" for checking out and returning books from the room collection.
12. Encourage children to build their own libraries.
13. Help children get acquainted with the children's book departments in bookstores.
14. Provide magazines and newspapers for children on their grade level.
15. Encourage children to share their own books with others.
16. Promote "Book Fairs" where children and parents are given the opportunity to select books in all price ranges and levels.
17. Give proper publicity to new books as they arrive in the school or room.

18. Plan for experiences that will help develop reading tastes. Provide quality books. Reviews of current books are found in periodicals such as Elementary English and The Horn Book. The New York Times Book Review Section has reviews of children's books each week. The American Library Association provides lists of books as does the Wilson's Children's Catalog. Consult the local librarians.

19. Provide time for children to share their recreational reading experiences. A few suggested ways of sharing reading experiences are:

    a. Dramatize a part of the story.

    b. Draw a picture or make a movie.

    c. Characterize the persons in the story.

    d. Make a mural composed of scenes from the book.

    e. Write or give orally a different ending to a story.

    f. Give an oral book review.

20. Use television programs. When a children's classic is seen on television, teachers should suggest that children read the story in its original form.

21. The ultimate in providing opportunities for free reading for boys and girls would be a materials center with carrels, books, listening centers, controlled readers, records, filmstrips, reference materials, newspapers, magazines where children could read.

READING--A PROFESSIONAL DEFINITION

By: Charles C. Walcutt

The literature on reading problems has a tremendous amount of discussion on definitions of the word reading. The volume of the discussion may seem extraordinary, at first glance. Doesn't everybody know what we mean by reading? Is there serious call for any discussion of so truly basic and universal a word? At second glance, another aspect of the discussion may seem more extraordinary. Why should a professional group have to devote so much time to defining its subject?

The voluminous debate does not seem extraordinary at all, however, if we recognize two facts. The first fact is that definitions are programs. The second fact is that the whole field of reading theory and practice has been in a healthy state of experiment and change for many years. The debate over the definition of reading reflects this vitality.

It seems appropriate to attempt a new and comprehensive definition that will clarify, satisfy, and therefore unite, those who are concerned with the theory and practice of reading instruction. A new definition may, at the same time, clarify--or should we say solidify?--the theoretical base upon which we build.

The problem of definition springs from the fact that the word reading has a good many meanings, several of which are involved when we speak of reading instruction in the primary grades. The word means pronounce, interpret, hear, search, apprehend, say aloud, study, discover the true nature of, assume a meaning, learn, gain information, have a specific wording, and have a certain quality--and this does not by any means exhaust the list of meanings.

I propose that reading as we commonly use the word in connection with teaching children, beginning at age six, has three meanings simultaneously. These meanings do not exclude one another, but rather must be seen as co-existing in the word if we are to earn and enjoy a comfortable and productive use of it. I would identify these meanings as reading^1, reading^2, and reading^3, as the linguists and semanticists use these indices. I discuss the meanings in the order in which they grow, but always with the understanding that no one of them explains what we are doing when we teach a child to read.

The surprising thing is how different the three meanings are.

Reading^1 is decoding the printed visual symbol into a spoken sound, which it designates. Reading, in other words, is turning writing into language. Language, as all the linguistics experts assure us, is spoken sound. Writing is a visual symbolization of those sounds. Reading converts writing into language. This definition holds whether or not the spoken sound is understood, and it holds at both ends of a great scale. For example, at one end, I can read a passage from a difficult poem without understanding it. At the other end of this scale, a child can read a single word like fid without understanding it. In both cases, we are converting printed symbols into proper sounds. We are turning writing into language.

Reading^2 is, strangely enough, not really reading at all. It is understanding language, yet it is the goal that we demand immediately upon the mastery of reading^1. The distinction may be clarified with an illustration. Suppose I

read aloud to you the most difficult of Shakespeare's sonnets. Suppose, for the sake of my argument, that you do not understand it. Is anything the matter with your reading? Obviously not, for you are not reading, but listening. Your problem is a problem of understanding language. But now, and more important, suppose that I who have read the sonnet to you do not understand it either. Would you say that anything was the matter with my reading? You might, but you would have to admit that my difficulty was exactly the same as yours--a difficulty with the language. You certainly would not send me to a remedial reading teacher, but to an expert on Shakespeare. So what we call reading here is actually understanding language. It is reading[2]. We certainly have it in mind when we speak of reading. It is the element of communication that is the goal of any reading instruction, but it is the same process that obtains in spoken discourse and communication.

Reading[3] is hardest to define, but essential to our use of the word. On a higher level, reading takes us into a world of art and intellect that is accessible only through the printed page. Whether history, anthropology, poetry, fiction, or philosophy is involved, we move into worlds of written discourse that are not accessible and indeed do not exist in spoken language. The literary style that is an essential form of the highest human thought depends on writing. We do not find the same style, the same quality of language, the same discrimination and breadth of vocabulary in spoken discourse. Where these higher qualities have appeared in spoken discourse, they have appeared there as a consequence of having been developed in writing. The intricate form of a sonnet or a Spenserian stanza, the elaborate form of a sentence by Macaulay or Gibbon, the close structure of an essay by John Stuart Mill (a hundred other examples would do as well) have all been developed through the written language, which permits the kind of study, elaboration, and accuracy that probably could not be sustained with only a spoken language.

It is true that the epic and the ballad seem to have been developed orally. They were composed, performed, and transmitted by professional minstrels, it appears, and constitute a special case. For during most periods of the historical past, it has been a commonplace that access to learning--which meant writing--brought special privileges of culture and power. The House of Intellect, which is the accumulated culture of man--which in other words is the Mind of the past brought up to and poured into the Mind of the present--has been both wrought and stored in the written word. The realms of gold, the hoardings of the world's great books, exist only in books and by virtue of the art of writing. Reading[3] takes us into these realms of gold, which are the glory of writing and the reward of reading.

The first steps into reading[3] come as early as the child begins to read a language that he does not hear spoken. As early as third grade, surely, the child who has learned to read will be coming upon hundreds of words that he does not say or hear, words that become part of his reading vocabulary--and these are found in sentences of a style and a precision that he will rarely hear spoken. Together, the rich precise literary vocabulary and the sentences and the paragraphs of skilled writing carry a level of art and thought that rises above--though it rests upon--the very summit of spoken discourse.

The specialists in linguistics emphasize the fact that language is spoken sound and that a particular language is to be known through its spoken patterns. These are what linguistic anthropologists record with special symbols in the

remotest villages, say, of Africa. It is the spoken language, furthermore, that finally seems to determine usage: a language grows in speech. These considerations are not challenged when we affirm that there are, indeed, two languages--the spoken language and the written language--and that we learn to read in order to read the written language.

There is no particular value to having first- or second-grade readers in the spoken language--that is, using only the vocabulary and the sentence structures that a first- or second-grade child would himself use. Reading takes the child into a different world, and this world is different precisely because it is the magical world of the written language.

And now another point that this definition clarifies: reading instruction that begins with a sight vocabulary skips over reading^{1} and goes on to reading^{2}, with the special complication that it attaches meaning directly to the printed symbol. Such instruction treats printing, that is, as if it were language. A sight word is taught as a meaning rather than as a symbol of a sound. Using context and picture clues, the child is led to reason and guess what a word may mean, rather than to figure out what sound that printed word represents and then go on to refer the sound to his knowledge of language. Under this approach, reading is defined as "bringing meaning to the printed page," and the definition clearly reveals that the child is being led to deduce the meaning of a printed word in a sentence rather than to decode that printed word into its proper sound and then understand the language that he has unlocked.